

Queen Anne's County
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Delores G. Kelley
Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
3 East
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Kelley,

Subject: SB 540 – Member Regulated Cooperatives – Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020)

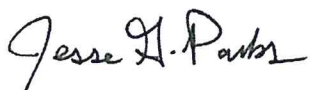
The Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission supports Senate Bill 540 as this bill will address our local need for internet access with a solution provided by a trusted, local partner, Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Queen Anne's County is home to over 49,770 residents, many of whom live in rural areas and do not have access to reliable high-speed internet. Through the Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020, Choptank Electric Cooperative will be able to leverage existing assets for the economics-of-scale necessary to provide high speed fiber internet to residents and businesses in underserved areas of our county.

Electric cooperatives were established over 80-years ago to bring electricity to the Rural America. Here in Queen Anne's County and throughout the Eastern Shore we see the need, again, for our cooperative to fill the void that is the "digital divide". Our 15-member Commission represents a diverse mix of businesses throughout our county. Business issues and challenges can change across industries but the one problem that all of our industries have in common is access to reliable high speed internet.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this legislation.

Respectfully,



Jesse Parks, Chair